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THE
LATEST SYSTEMS
IN
MEDICINE

THE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS DELIVERED TO
THE OHIO STATE MEDICAL SOCIETY
JUNE, 1885,

By
J. C. REEVE, M. D.,
OF DAYTON, OHIO.

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THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS.

SOME OF THE LATEST SYSTEMS IN MEDICINE.*

BY J. C. REEVE, M. D., DAYTON, OHIO.

The history of a science is a history of the human mind in its progress along a certain line. It shows by what stumbling steps, by what gropings through fogs of error, advance has been made. Medicine, like other branches of human knowledge, illustrates this. It has undergone evolution; the process is still going on—therefore it is not yet perfect. In its past, then, there has been much of error, and in its present there is much to be desired. Yet neither as to past or present has medicine anything to fear from comparison with other professions. A perfect form of government has not yet been devised. As bitter things have been said of the law, its delays and uncertainties, as of medicine, while its volumes upon volumes of conflicting and overruling decisions bear witness to its imperfections. Religious wars and religious persecutions furnish some of the darkest pages of human history, while the numerous spires of every city and village attest the diversity of interpretation of the revealed Word.

To-day I ask your attention to some points in the preceding stages of the progress of medicine, which present much of interest and of profit, and a study of which is essential to a comprehension of the medicine of to-day.

*The period of time passed over in this sketch, and the number of points touched upon, render it impossible to give references in every instance. The facts have been derived from the following works:

RENOUARD; History of Medicine; translated by COMEGYS.

SPRENGEL; Geschichte der Arzneikunde.

HECKER; Geschichte der neueren Heilkunde.

FONSSAGRIVES; Principes de Therapeutique General; Introduction; Deuxieme Ed.

TROUSSEAU ET PIDOUX; Traite de Therapeutique, etc.; Introduction; Huitieme ed.

BOUCHUT; Histoire de la Medicine et des Doctrines Medicales.

CANABIS; Revolutions de la Medicine.

BAUER; Geschichte der Aderlasse.

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One fact in the history of medicine stands prominent—it has always taken on the character of the age. In ancient times, and indeed down to a comparatively recent period, it was made a part of philosophy, and the history of one was the history of the other. Forced, then, to take its place in a rigid framework of doctrines, which included the mental, moral and physical world, and explained the economy of the universe, it had no independent existence, and moved but as a puppet. Again, it has always varied with the changes which its allied sciences have undergone. Thus, when chemistry was making brilliant discoveries, pathology and therapeutics became largely chemical; when physics was making rapid progress, vital actions, normal and abnormal, took on a mechanical aspect; under the influence of the discoveries of Newton, and the doctrines of Des Cartes, an attempt was made to give them even a mathematical character.

Medicine to-day takes on the character of the age. It is active, enterprising, practical and scientific. It is scientific, so far as our knowledge permits; in spirit, it is entirely so, for it uses instruments of precision as far as possible, and much more than ever before. It accepts no statements that are not sustained by experiment or confirmed by numerous observers. Like the age, it is advancing, and more rapidly than ever before in its history. He would have been a bold man, who had stood up at our last meeting and proclaimed that the days of ether and chloroform for eye surgery had passed away. The brilliant discovery of the past year is but one example of the progress our art is making.

With these positive features of the medicine of to-day, allow me to contrast one negative. It is, the absence of any general theory of disease, or of the action of remedies. In no other point is there greater contrast between the medicine of the past and of the present than in this. We have no "system" of medicine. Upon this point the public is sadly ignorant. We are called "allopaths" by those who do not know what the term implies, and by those whose interest it is to make us out as narrow as themselves. The truth is, in the treatment of disease we are guided by the teachings of experience—not by theory.

What is a "system" in medicine? A set of hypothetical explanations of the nature and processes of disease,

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upon which are based dogmatic rules for the administration of remedies. A system differs from a theory or hypothesis in this, that the temporary and provisional use of these is recognized, while the doctrines of the other are accepted as final. Theory and hypothesis are the steps by which scientific men reach knowledge; the dogmas of a system are held by its disciples to be ultimate truth. When theories no longer agree with facts, they are abandoned; if facts do not agree with a system, so much the worse for the facts. Theories and hypotheses are the servants of the human mind; a system is its master.

The past of medicine is full of systems. They have been the curse of the profession, if not of the human race. They have led to such exaggerations of the value of some remedies, and such excesses in certain lines of treatment, as to give foundation for some of the bitterest sarcasms which have been directed against our art. Under some systems, the treatment of disease was but pure expectancy, then medicine at the bed-side was justly termed, "a meditation upon death," and the biting sarcasm of Goethe's Mephistopheles was fully justified.* Under others, excessive activity with powerful remedies was the rule; then the physician was likened to a blind man striking with a club, sometimes hitting the disease, oftener the patient. In the history of medical systems you will find that the Dr. Sangrado, of Le Sage, was not a mere creature of the imagination, and that the characters of Moliere were actors on the stage of real life.

It is to some of these systems that I would direct your attention to-day. The latest that figured in the history of medicine are four. They are the systems of John Brown, of Broussais, of Rasori, and of Hahnemann. What were the doctrines of these systems? What influence did they exert upon medical progress? What impression did they make on therapeutics? What remains of them now?

In regard to all these systems the following general statements may be made: 1. They had their origin in the unsatisfactory and imperfect state of medicine at the time. 2. Each of them contained doctrines as erroneous and exaggerations as great as any existing in the prevailing

* "Der Geist der Medecin is leicht zu fassen;
Ihr durchstudirt die grosse und kleine Welt,
Um es am Ende geh'n zu lassen,
Wie's Gott gefällt."

practice. 3. Each contained a measure of truth, small though it may have been, and this has passed into the general domain of medicine, while the residue has passed, or is passing, to oblivion. 4. Neither of them gained more than a small fraction of the profession as disciples, but these waged bitter warfare against the general body and its doctrines.

Let us go back one hundred years. Within thirty or forty years of that time these systems had their rise. Cullen published his "Elements" in 1789, which for nearly fifty years was the text-book of the civilized world. It was the first effort to place the practice of medicine on a scientific basis. Cullen stands at the dividing line between ancient and modern medicine. Haller's then recent discovery of irritability and contractibility as inherent properties of muscular fibre and of the sensibility of nerves, separates these two periods as by a great gulf. The solids could now play their part in physiology and pathology. Humoral pathology was overthrown after an unbroken reign of nearly eighteen centuries, and therapeutics became something more than an attempt to correct the acidity or viscosity of the fluids.

Cullen had something of a system based on spasm and atony of the capillaries, but at the bed-side he was a true clinician, and his system never governed him; for, although the father of solidism, he did not deny to the fluids a share in pathology, nor did he base his therapeutics entirely on theory.

Within about thirty or forty years of Cullen's appearance, the four systems alluded to took their rise. It was a notable period in human history. Politically, largely under the influence of our revolution and the establishment of our republic, France threw off her monarchical form of government, feudalism and the throne went down together, the foundations of social life were broken up, anarchy prevailed, until order was restored by a military despotism. Throughout Europe governments tottered, while up to 1815 successive waves of war swept from one end of the continent to the other. Notwithstanding the clash of arms it was a period of great intellectual activity. The sciences had made and were making rapid progress; the ideas of the past were unsettled without establishing new ones on a solid foundation. Electricity was a new wonder, and

seemed about to reveal all the secrets of vitality, normal and abnormal, and to furnish a universal remedy. Phrenology made its appearance and rapidly took a position from which it has ever since steadily declined. Mesmer came upon the scene with the first revelations of animal magnetism, now known as artificial somnambulism, farther to astonish and bewilder mankind. Never in the history of the world has there been a period when opinions were more unsettled and when inquiry was more restless. Speculation was the leading tendency of the times, a belief in the wonderful everywhere prevalent, while Germany was especially befogged by complicated and intricate systems of philosophy. These were fit times for the birth of systems of medicine, for medicine like other branches of knowledge was in a transition stage; the doctrines of the past were shaken and undermined, new ones had not yet been established. Taking the best possible view, medicine was in a deplorable condition; it was a mixture of dogmatism, of empiricism, and of mysticism. Cullen's influence had not yet, in the early part of the period, destroyed the influence of the humoral pathology, and based upon this, blood-letting was carried to excess. The *materia medica* was scanty, and the powers of medicine but imperfectly known. Moreover, a barbarous polypharmacy prevailed, and medicines were administered in complex and incongruous mixtures, as if by the number of ingredients to make up for want of precision of knowledge.

It would be unjust, however, not to mention the substantial advances made during this period, or to omit the names of those honest workers in our profession who at once added to knowledge and benefited the human race. Just before the opening of this period, Morgagni laid the foundations of pathological anatomy, John Hunter made his brilliant discoveries in physiology and surgery, and William Hunter his researches in obstetrics. Priestly discovered oxygen in 1774, and soon after Lavoisier made out the chemistry of combustion and respiration. Pneumatic chemistry had made great advances, and at the beginning of the century, Sir Humphrey Davy, in one short sentence on nitrous oxide, gave the first index to the road which led, nearly fifty years later, to the discovery of anesthetics. Bell, in 1794, delivered those lectures on surgery which inspired Ephraim McDowell to perform

ovariotomy — the most glorious triumph of surgery. Bichat, by his study of the tissues founded general anatomy. Jenner, in this period, discovered vaccination, never surpassed in practical benefit to mankind. Towards the close of it, Bright, in England, opened up a new and most important chapter in renal pathology, and in France, Laennec perfected the stethoscope, and by comparison of the physical signs during life, with the changes found after death, made an advance in practical medicine of inestimable value. These were some of the substantial gains of medicine during the time in which these systems rose and flourished. While they made progress along a very narrow line, the general profession was advancing with a broad front.

John Brown was a Scotchman of humble parentage. His early life was a struggle with poverty. Much of his education was gained by teaching and by translating into Latin, or by writing, the theses of other students. For a time he was a teacher, and became a tutor in Cullen's family, but they quarreled, and this had, without a doubt its influence in the origin of a system which was in opposition to the leading spirit of the times. He was a man of great ability and good classical education, endowed with an excellent memory, and great powers of language. A wit, a brilliant conversationalist, an eloquent and ready speaker, with a love of controversy that left no opportunity for the exercise of his powers unimproved, he attacked the views of his adversaries with the keenest sarcasm, and maintained his own opinions with that dogmatism which always wins the assent of the young and unthinking. Moreover, he was a convivialist, with the usual results; dissipation marred his prospects, prevented his success, and doubtless shortened his life.

Brown published his system in 1780. He opens in the usual strain of reformers. He had passed, he says, seventy years in lamenting the profound uncertainty and the impenetrable obscurities of a salutary art. All at once a revolution came to him. It was the result of a fit of gout. Previously he had treated himself in orthodox fashion with debilitating remedies and strict diet. This time he tried the opposite plan. He feasted, he drank to merriment, and his gout rapidly disappeared. "I saw by that," he says, "that there was an asthenic inflamma-

tion." This was an unrecognized fact then, familiar enough now. One fact would seem a narrow foundation upon which to build a system of medicine; yet Brown's system was thus built, as others have been. It was built in the cabinet, out of the imagination, not from facts gathered at the bed-side and observations made in the dead-house.

This is his system. Life is the result of incitability. All its expressions and phenomena are the result of the action of stimuli or excitants upon this incitability. It would seem, then, very important to know what incitability is. It is a word. As a thing it is unknown in nature; revealed only by its effects. Brown nowhere defines it, but says that every being is endowed with a certain amount of it which being exhausted, life ceases. It pervades the entire system, it varies in degree, but never differs in quality. Diseases are changes in this incitability, either of excess or deficiency, caused by the influence of external or internal stimuli. A lessened incitability is debility, and this may be either the effect of too little incitation, or the result of over-stimulation. Diseases from increased incitability are sthenic, from decreased, asthenic. But there was a wonderful disproportion between these two classes, 97 per cent. were asthenic, 3 per cent. sthenic. The location of different diseases in these two classes was entirely arbitrary; some very dissimilar in nature and in symptoms, were ranged side by side. A scale was formed, which read upwards toward increased, and downwards toward decreased incitability, and the word of the master gave each disease its position.

In this system, local diseases received scant attention, everything depended on the condition of the whole economy. As for etiology, students were warned against the study of the causes of disease, that "venomous serpent of philosophy." A knowledge of anatomy was of slight value. Any idea of specific diseases, or of remedies acting specifically, either against disease, or on particular organs, was entirely lacking. The symptoms of the patient, even, were of little account, all depended alone on an estimate of the powers of the general system.

Brown's therapeutics was the corollary of his pathological doctrines. For sthenic diseases, he used depletion and evacuants. But we have seen how small proportion of dis-

eases he recognized as of this character; therefore, venesection and other lowering measures played but an insignificant part. Nearly all diseases being asthenic, stimulants were used most frequently and most freely. Wine, and alcoholic liquors, camphor, ether, and electricity were his chief remedies, but above and beyond all, opium. His administration of this was in accord with his estimate of its powers as a stimulant—extravagant. In fevers he gave ten drops of laudanum every fifteen minutes, until the patient slept, and then doubled the dose! It is stated that he gave sometimes as much as 150 drops at a dose! which suggests grave doubts as to the quality!

Brown's system then was simple so far as treatment is concerned, and simplicity is said to be the seal of truth. Hear him: "So great is the simplicity to which the art of medicine has been brought back, that a physician upon coming to the bed-side has only three things to determine. First, whether the disease is general or local; second, if general, whether sthenic or asthenic; third, to what degree it is either. These points decided, he has only to lay down his plan of cure, and carry it out with appropriate remedies."

This was the system of Brown. Almost entirely destitute of clinical foundation, a creature of the imagination, one-sided to a degree, it combined simplicity in theory with simplicity in practice. Wonderful it is to us now, that it could gain adherents; yet, presented by an able advocate, in captivating style, and with dogmatic affirmation, aided by great dissatisfaction with existing practice, and by the charms of novelty, it made for a time a strong faction in medicine. Those who talk of medical sects and their antagonistic feelings at the present day, should go back to the times of Brunonianism. So bitter were the debates in the Royal Medical Society of Edinburg, that several duels were fought, and at Gottingen there were street fights between the students who were disciples of Brown and their opponents, and the military had to be called out to quell the riots! Emperors, and even the Pope, were dragged into the contest and issued decrees relating to the subject!

Faulty and false as was this system, it was a reaction, violent and irregular perhaps, but still a just reaction against a prevailing humoralism, which even Cullen's influ-

ence had not been able to abolish, against an abuse of blood-letting, and against an excessive polypharmacy. It caused a recognition of the facts that frequently there is discord between the condition of a part and the state of the general system, that stimulants are often useful under circumstances where they had not been heretofore used, and that a consideration of the patient should accompany a study of his disease.

Broussais was born in 1772 and died in 1838. The early part of his professional life was spent in the French navy and army. His first publication in 1803 was on hectic fever, and in 1808 he put forth a more considerable work on thoracic and abdominal inflammations. His peculiar views did not attract much attention until he had impressed them upon successive classes of students at the military hospital of Val de Grace. In 1816 he made his appearance as a reformer, in his *Examen des Doctrines Medicales*, extended and completed in 1821; a work, which high authority says is illuminated by flashes of genius.

He was a man of marked ability, endowed with great rhetorical powers, ardent in temperament, aggressive in spirit, positive in conviction, bold in attack, bitter in invective and keen in satire. He divided the profession of Paris; as usual, the young joined the ranks of the innovator, the old remained true to the doctrines in which they had been educated. Moreover, there was a touch of politics in his doctrines harmonious with the times—the *ancien regime* of medicine was to be overthrown!

Again was proposed reform heralded by arraignment and denunciation of the past and self-laudation of the reformer. Medicine was covered with the darkness of night, he says, until he appeared; pathology had been a mass of errors; now doctrines were taught which would prove most beneficial to the human race! The "incitability" of Brown now became "irritation." As with Brown the general system was alone considered, with Broussais the part became the principal factor. The relative proportion of asthenic and sthenic disease was now reversed; the latter by far outnumbered the former. A state of irritation having been occasioned in an organ or part, by the influence of irritants, either external or internal, it was but a step to inflammation, and this was the keynote of his system. By sympathy, distant organs were affected; the heart, and

there was fever; the brain, and there was delirium. Crisis, instead of being favored, according to Hippocratic doctrine, was to be avoided as a violent and dangerous effort of Nature. All pathology was in the one word, inflammation.

Hear him: "It is by an inflammation which destroys with more or less promptitude, one or several of the organs essential to life, that the largest number of mankind perish. Every practitioner accustomed to contemplate the ruins of this admirable structure, which he has not been able to prevent crumbling to decay, is impressed with this truth. If we turn over the pages of the immortal work of Morgagni, we find everywhere the unequivocal evidences of inflammation. When we examine patients afflicted with chronic diseases, the majority of them complain of fixed and permanent pain of some internal part, while the wasting fever they suffer, indicates to us, too often, that they will perish by phlogistic disorganization of some of the viscera. If we give close attention to the symptoms of acute diseases, we find almost always, a trouble of the circulation, a more intense local heat, accompanied with redness and swelling, if the organ is external, and if not, these signs are manifest upon an examination when life is extinct."

Of all the organs of the body, the stomach and upper part of the alimentary canal, were, according to Broussais, the most frequently attacked by inflammation, and disease of this part from the wide range of its sympathies was also the most important. How could be better explained the loss of appetite, the nausea, the coated tongue, the malaise, the headache and depression of spirits which attend the onset of all acute diseases? *Gastro-enteritis* was the prime factor in pathology; the cause, the consequence or the accompaniment of almost every disease. He who studied the stomach, studied the most essential part of all diseases. Only by study of the stomach could fevers be understood, for all fevers were gastro-enterites. Essential fevers were denied, and upon no point did he fight the faculty more strenuously than upon this. In vain did Chomel adduce one hundred autopsies made at *la Charite*, in which not a trace of gastric inflammation was found. What had facts to do with a system? When anatomical changes in the intestines were present, as in typhoid fever,

they were the cause, not the consequences of the fever. All anatomical changes were the result of inflammation and positive proof of its existence. Such growths as melanosis, scirrhus, and all forms of cancer, together with the effusions of dropsy; and what could be more positive than scrofulous enlargement of lymphatic glands, and the tuberculous deposits of phthisis? Small-pox began with a gastro-enteritis, so did measles and scarlet fever! Corvisart, who had just published the first work on diseases of the heart, and Laennec, who was introducing and perfecting the stethoscope, were both reproached with overlooking gastro-enteritis, the most important accompaniment of cardiac diseases. Even the neuroses did not escape. What plainer proof of inflammation than delirium, coma, and convulsions? Hysteria, mania, melancholia and imbecility, were also submerged in this gulf of gastric pathology.

Here, then, was a system as simple as Brown's. It differed only in that diseases were all local instead of general, sthenic instead of asthenic. Departures from health varied only in degree, not at all or but little, in kind; whatever the locality, however diverse the symptoms, the morbid element was ever the same; changes in the fluids were ignored, all was inflammation.

Broussais therapeutics can be soon disposed of. His treatment was the logical result of his pathology. The healing powers of nature were practically denied, and the powers of the physician over-estimated. It was only duty to combat *vi et armis* these congestions and this inflammation. Blood-letting was the most powerful means at command, consequently blood-letting was the leading, almost the only, remedy. The lancet was used for diseases the most diverse, as dropsies, hypochondria, and other mental aberrations, phthisis, and the exanthemata. Intermittent and remittent fevers were periodical gastro-enterites, and were to be treated by bleeding at every accession of the paroxysm. Bark was only to be given during the apyrexia. A trace of this doctrine has remained within my remembrance, and we still occasionally hear, from the laity, expressions of surprise at the administration of quinine during fever. Consequent on this gastro-enteritic pathology, leeching to the epigastrium was a favorite procedure. Under Broussais, leeches were used more freely than ever

before or since, or ever will be again. Thirty or forty were applied to the epigastrium at once, nor was one application all. Besides these measures there was virtually nothing. His views of gastric and intestinal inflammation caused him to reject purgatives and emetics as positively injurious, and to neglect salines. Emollient drinks, ptisanes, gum-water, barley-water, decoction of althea; these, and only these, besides blood-letting.

It would seem impossible that any good could result from such a system as this. Yet it bore some good fruit. It brought back to consideration the local affection, and in this was a counter-balance to Brunonianism. It gave great stimulus to the study of pathological anatomy, in which the profession demonstrated the falsity of his doctrines. It was the means of advancing our knowledge of fevers, individualizing them, substituting simplicity for complexity, anatomical knowledge for theoretical explanations. Broussais, like Brown, overthrew for a time poly-pharmacy, but at the same time he destroyed the *materia medica*. His therapeutics, however, will not bear comparison with Brown's. It was better to be sick in Edinburgh than in Paris. Of these two systems, we may accept a good deal of the treatment of Brown and reject his pathology; and accept much of the doctrine of Broussais and reject his therapeutics.

The system of Rasori need not detain us long. It did not extend much beyond Italy, the land of its birth, but it modified the other systems, had its influence upon medicine, and so demands notice. Rasori translated Brown's work and was at first an ardent Brunonian, but afterward modified and even reversed the doctrines of his master. He published no formal treatise, but papers and pamphlets, and the system reached its full development under his disciple, Tommasini, in 1821.

Again, diseases were only of two classes, *sthenic* and *asthenic*, but now the terms were, "the diathesis of stimulus and of contro-stimulus." But Rasori agreed with Broussais and differed with Brown as to the relative proportion of the two. Again diseases were *sthenic* or *asthenic* by the word of the master—*chlorosis*, for instance was a slow *angioleucitis*, an inflammation, therefore a *sthenic* disease. Remedies were stimulant or contro-stimulant as they had proved beneficial in one or the other

class of diseases. In case of doubt as to which class a given case belonged to, the physician was to make a trial, of venesection for instance, and decide from the effects.

With Brown, debility was relative or indirect, the relative being from insufficient stimulus, the indirect from exhaustion of the incitability, the result of over-stimulation; there was no such thing as a direct debility or asthenia. This direct debility, especially as produced by remedies, was recognized by Rasori, and so it was by Broussais, but blood-letting was his only sedative or contro-stimulant, while Rasori found in tartar-emetic, digitalis and other medicines efficient contro-stimulants. Inflammation was now fought with vascular sedatives, as well as with venesection. Tartar-emetic was Rasori's leading medicine. By study of its action he was led to the doctrine of tolerance. He found that in large, even enormous doses, it did not produce emesis, and his explanation was that it acted directly on the disease. By Rasori, medicines were almost always given singly. While, for Brown, they only cured by affecting the general system, Rasori taught the important doctrine that they had a special or specific action on individual organs, which was a decided advance. Thus, he had vasculo-cardiac and cardio-vascular sedatives, gastric, spinal and cephalic contro-stimulants, etc.

Here, again, was a system based on the impotency of nature, and on the power of art to cure disease. Any tendency towards health by crisis or otherwise was denied. The most violent and perturbative and depressing measures were pushed to extremes. It was the system of *contraria contrariis* carried to excess. The *contraria*, however, was directed against the diathesis, for the disease was often treated by similars; as jalap and gamboge for dysentery, nitre for diabetes, etc. Medicines were administered in doses simply enormous; nitrate of potash, two and a half ounces; gamboge, a scruple; tartar-emetic, twelve grains; jalap, one to four scruples.

Let us take a case from the records: The patient was a robust man in the second day of the disease. He had considerable fever, violent pain in the right side of the chest, pulse strong, breathing short. Venesection to two pounds, and eighteen grains of digitalis. On the third day there was still pain, pulse 112, expectoration bloody; bleeding eighteen ounces, twenty four grains of digitalis;

in the evening eighteen ounces more blood taken. On the fourth day the same symptoms, eighteen ounces of blood morning and evening and thirty-six grains of digitalis. Fifth day same state of affairs; two venesections and two scruples of digitalis. Sixth day, all the symptoms worse, pulse very small, 108, great depression of strength; bleeding to one pound and two scruples of digitalis. Seventh day no change, the bleeding and digitalis to be repeated as on the day before. Eighth and ninth days, breathing very short, small and frequent pulse, worse in every respect; again venesection to a pound; bronchial rattling, great anxiety, death. No wonder! He died, as did the notary in Gil Blas, because he could not stand another venesection, and another dose of the favorite remedy!

It would seem to us now as if a fatal result must necessarily follow in every case treated upon these principles. Yet Rasori gives 22 per cent. as his mortality from pneumonia; while for all diseases it was 16 per cent. Tomasini claims that the mortality of his hospital practice was the lowest ever recorded, 10 per cent, or including the mild cases, only 5 per cent. I think we are forced to the conclusion that, while the Rasorian system furnished ample evidence of how much the human frame could endure, it also shows the utter unreliability of figures as indicating the results of any mode of practice. Unless you can "go behind the returns" there is nothing so unreliable as statistics in medicine.

It was time for some one to appear and revive the teaching of Hypocrates, that nature sometimes cures disease, and that the physician is her minister and assistant, not her autocrat. Instead came Hahnemann, and again the curative powers of Nature were denied, and the effects of medicines exaggerated. Again the profession was arraigned and denounced for its imperfections, and the new doctrines proclaimed with intense egotism. The origin of Hahnemann's system, like that of Brown, was in a single observation. Reflecting on the mode in which Peruvian bark cured fever, he took a dose himself; it was followed by fever, therefore, it cured by exciting a disease similar to the one for which it was given. From this proceeded the doctrine of *similia similibus curantur*. It was announced as the universal law of cure, and a "system" was built up which equals the others in assumptions, in hypothe-



ses and speculations, and surpasses them in demands upon credulity. It is a system to one feature of which, the small doses of medicine, attention has been too exclusively directed, while its monstrous doctrines in pathology deserve equal, if not more, attention.

1. Disease is purely dynamical; a change in the spiritual nature of man. Its causes cannot possibly be material. It is known only by its symptoms therefore, all study of pathology is useless, nor does the physician need a knowledge of anatomy.*

2. Diseases are never cured by antipathic or by allopathic treatment. These methods may apparently cure, but they really result in increase of the disease. Disease can only be cured homeopathically; that is, by exciting by medicine, a disease similar to the one under which the patient suffers. This artificial disease extinguishes the natural disease and no more; it acts exactly to the line of health and no further.†

3. All palliative treatment results in positive injury to the patient. If opium be given for pain; as soon as it has ceased to act, the pain will be increased beyond its original intensity.‡

4. All direct treatment of local diseases, non-traumatic, is wrong and injurious. Those of the eye and ear are not excepted. Removal of an encysted tumor, may, and is likely to, be followed by blindness, deafness, insanity, dropsy or apoplexy.††

5. Treatment directed to any leading symptom will only bring worse disaster. Electricity for partial paralysis is specified; it will be followed by entire loss of power.**

6. The powers of medicine should be ascertained by trials or "provings" on healthy persons, and in no other way.

7. But a single medicine should be given at a time, and the dose of that should not be soon repeated, its effect may last 40, 50, or 100 days.‡‡ No matter how suit-

* ORGANON, *introduction*, and § 16.—The references are to the third American edition, by Hering; New York, 1849.

† §§ 67, 112

‡ § 69.

†† § 205 *note*.

** § 59.

‡‡ § 246.

able the medicine, an aggravation follows if it be repeated on the morrow or the day following.*

8. The dose of medicine must be small, exceedingly small; so minute that why it is limited at all remains a mystery. You well know the formula: one drop of the mother tincture to ninety of alcohol, to be shaken together twice and only twice; one drop of that, to ninety more of alcohol, and so on thirty times, when a drop contains the decillionth part of the original. Then a globule of sugar moistened with this makes a dose more potent than the original drop.

9. A dynamical or spiritual power is conferred on medicines by the shakings, or the rubbings of solids. The influence of these shakings is so great that whereas in the beginning, ten were used, later he was forced to reduce the number to two. Why successive dilutions are required, is not clear, for it is positively stated that having shaken for half an hour, a grain of natron with half an ounce of water, the fluid attained an energy equal to the thirtieth dilution.†

10. By this process of preparation inert substances such as common salt and charcoal and flint become endowed with powerful medicinal virtue.**

11. It is not necessary that medicines be swallowed. Applied to any sentient part of the body, their action extends to all other parts.† Smelling one of the medicated globules, and smelling but once, is sufficient in many cases for a permanent cure.‡‡

12. The vast majority of chronic diseases are caused by psora, the principal outward manifestation of which is common itch. This psora in the system, notwithstanding that diseases are all of spiritual nature and that their causes cannot be material, is the cause of almost all chronic diseases. The following are mentioned: insanity, epilepsy, cancer, gout, dropsy, paralysis, nervous debility, spasms and pains of all kinds, worms and intermittent fever.†† "It has cost me twelve years of study," says Hahnemann, "to discover this great truth." A few years afterwards,

* § 246, note.

† §§ 270, note, 271, 269.

** § 269. † § 289. ‡‡ Introduction note; §§ 246, 285, 228, and notes.

†† Introduction, note; §§ 210, 244, 242, 80 and note.

the microscope revealed the cause of itch to be an insect burrowing under the skin.

These are the doctrines of the Organon as briefly stated as possible. They need no examination, now, since those who avow themselves homeopaths hasten to add that they are not such as Hahnemann was. But no study of this system is complete which does not include a chronological view of its development, and the mental characteristics of its author.

Its doctrines were first propounded in the medical journals, and at first, medicines were administered in ordinary doses. To meet the aggravation of symptoms caused by adding fuel to the fire, the doses were gradually diminished until the infinitesimal was reached and the mysticism of dynamization was conjured up. The new doctrines then were sharply criticised by the profession. They could not have escaped this had they been far less revolutionary. There is a natural conservatism in the human mind which is not confined to medicine. Great and valuable truths have at first met with opposition. You all know the history of the telegraph, the locomotive and transatlantic steam navigation. Hahnemann did not bear criticism well. In this respect he stands in marked contrast to Haller and Harvey. When their doctrines were assailed, they pointed again to the facts sustaining them, and awaited with dignity that verdict in their favor which both lived to see. Then, in preparing his own medicines, Hahnemann violated the law, and the apothecaries prosecuted him. This is the foundation for the cry of persecution by his adherents. He became more and more embittered at the profession, broke with it, and appealed to the people. The Organon, published in 1810, is this appeal. It contains the first complete presentation of his doctrines. It is full of bitter denunciation and of misrepresentations of the profession, while it nowhere approaches in character to that of a scientific treatise. It is full of positive affirmations, without a shadow of proof; words figure for things as imaginary as the incitability of Brown; in its claim that man can endow matter with spirit by rubbing it in a mortar it taxes belief to an extent never before attempted; the fundamental doctrine of *similia similibus curantur* is supported by illustrations from the physical world that are simply ridiculous, and the

medical proof consists of a few dozen isolated cases exceptional in character.

Later in life came the psoric theory. The treatise on Chronic Diseases was published in 1828. By this time Hahnemann felt his position as the head of a medical sect, together with the necessity of maintaining it, and he enunciated his doctrines with the tone and authority of a master. He brooked no difference of opinion, was autocratic and dogmatic in the highest degree. Hear him:

"He who does not walk on exactly the same line with me, who diverges, if it be but the breadth of a straw, to the right or to the left, is an apostate and a traitor, and with him I will have nothing to do."

"It holds good, and will continue to hold good, as a homeopathic therapeutic maxim, not to be refuted by any experience in the world, that the best dose of the properly selected remedy, is always the very smallest one in one of the high dynamizations as well for chronic, as for acute diseases."

Here then, was all right of opinion denied, and all future progress blocked, by the word of the master. And this is the man that homeopaths place on a pedestal and worship as a hero!

The question arises as to how and why such a system as this could gain any acceptance whatever. A satisfactory answer contains three divisions.

1. The character of the times in which it was promulgated. It gratified the love of the mystical; it had, for the masses, the charms of novelty, for the educated, those of speculative philosophy.

2. Medicine was brought down to the level of the laity. Amateur prescribing was a marked feature of the early days of homeopathy. It was simplicity itself to hear the patient's symptoms, look in a book for a drug which would cause just such symptoms, and deal out medicines which by no possibility could injure.

3. Chief above all other things it was, like Brunonianism, a reaction and a protest against the abuse of bloodletting by the profession.

The latter point deserves more than a passing mention. Few of us now realize how sad a chapter in the history of medicine is that on bloodletting. We need not be ashamed to acknowledge it now; we are not responsible for



the errors of our ancestors. Had the abuse of venesection been confined to individuals, like Broussais and Rastori, or Guy Patin, who bled a patient 84 years of age four times, and an infant of three days, not much could be said, but the profession at large was guilty of an abuse of this remedy. It was the standard remedy for all inflammatory diseases. Inflammation was then a *phlogosis*, a burning, and he who would not take away the fuel, was as culpable as one who should see his neighbor's house burn and not throw on water. Bleeding was the leading remedy in fevers of all kinds. I can remember the last illness of my mother; she died of bilious remittent fever; she was bled several times "because the fever had risen again." Almost within a stone's throw of this building, lives one of the early settlers of Dayton, a matron around whom cluster grandchildren and great-grandchildren; she has told me that in one attack of fever she was bled sixteen days in succession. What can we say now as to the necessity of a formal argument against venesection in phthisis, or in regard to bleeding in cases of placenta previa even after large losses of blood.*

Is there any explanation of such palpable abuse of a remedy? It may be found, I think, first, in the comparatively few remedies then at command; chemistry had not yet showered her gifts upon the profession. Second, in the fact that the lancet always produced an effect, and that effect was sometimes markedly for good. Then followed the great error of the system makers, generalizing from a few facts, and the remedy was used always because beneficial sometimes. Looking back to the early years of my professional life, I can recall cases in which great and immediate relief was given by a venesection. The subjects were young and robust countrymen with severe acute affections of the chest one or two cases, of injury with great oppression of breathing, and puerperal convulsions. Further, it should be borne in mind that the profession was not alone to blame. This remedy was enthroned as a sovereign in the popular mind. Any physician who omitted it would have been arraigned at the bar of public opinion. Herein is the history of this error like that of others

* CHAPMAN, Essay on Midwifery, 1733; Treatise, 1753. SMELLIE, Midwifery, 2nd Ed., Vol. III, in collection of cases; Smellie himself did not thus practice.

belonging to humanity. How many murders have been committed by duelling under the pressure of a false public sentiment?

Venesection was not only the great popular remedy, but it had been elevated to a hygienic measure of the first importance, probably because in those times nothing was known of hygiene. The peasantry went in troops to be bled; with all classes, it was as regular as spring and fall house-cleaning. In the life of Louis XI we read, that in one year, to preserve his Majesty's august health, he was bled forty times, and took one hundred purges. This must have made it lively for royalty!

To return to homeopathy. It rendered service by the assistance it gave in ascertaining the natural history of disease, which, for obvious reasons, is one of the most difficult problems the profession has ever had to solve. Behind the curtain of an active medication, it was pure expectancy, and thus while denying Nature's power it gave the opportunity to observe it. Again, it supplemented the work of Brown by showing that diseases could be recovered from without any lowering measures. It also assisted in the overthrow of an excessive polypharmacy, and it gave a stimulus to the study of the physiological action of medicines.

In these directions, then, homeopathy exerted a favorable influence upon medicine. The extent of that influence must possibly be left to the historian of the future, to the time when partisanship shall have passed away, as it has now disappeared in regard to the systems of Brown and Broussais. With no desire to abate the just measure of credit due to Hahnemann, it is impossible to accord all that is claimed for him. Thus, the whole merit of testing medicines by personal observation of their effects is claimed, by his followers, to belong to him. But Haller preceded him in this work, as Hahnemann admits, and Størck, Hahnemann's own countryman, but whom he does not mention, antedates him thirty years. Størck tested the powers of aconite and conia and hyoscyamus, and gave us stramonium. To grant the claim that Hahnemann deserves all the praise, or even the major part of it, for testing medicines or for a milder therapeutics, would be to do gross injustice to other workers in the field, and to ignore other influences. It would be to overlook the

direct influence of Brunonianism, and the indirect influence of Broussaism. The former had demonstrated that inflammations and fevers were cured without depletion; the latter incited a spirit of revolt against its extravagant doctrines which was led by Laennec and Louis, and sustained by Rostan and Grisolle. It would be to overlook the general current of progress, which was setting strongly in that direction. Graves, during the period under consideration, revolutionized the treatment of fevers. He banished all lowering measures, and gave food and stimulants. So great was the change and so beneficial the effects, that he expressed the wish to have engraved on his tombstone, "This man fed fevers." Graves derived his inspiration from Brown, not Hahnemann. Minor and Tully, in New England, under the same influence, most emphatically condemned the abuse of venesection.* About 1830 Marshall Hall showed that certain cerebral symptoms in children, appearing in the course of exhausting diseases, did not indicate inflammation and required food and stimulants instead of leeches and purgatives. Then came the Vienna School, under Skoda and Rokitansky, with courage to watch the progress of acute disease without interference of any kind, and opened a way afterwards so happily followed in the treatment of pneumonia by Hughes Bennett of Edinburg. The value of quinine in malarial fevers, and the importance of large doses, became recognized, and blistering and bleeding were abandoned in this large class of diseases. I see men sitting before me who can remember when two grains of quinine was considered a full dose, and that never to be given when the fever was on. For this advance, the surgeons of our army, and practitioners in the southern part of this country, deserve a large share of the credit. Nor must the introduction of *veratrum viride* be overlooked. It was pushed with energy by its advocates as a substitute for venesection, and they succeeded in establishing it as such to no small degree.

* "The lancet is a weapon that annually slays more than the sword. The king of Great Britain, without doubt, loses every year more subjects by these means—depleting remedies, — than the battle and campaign of Waterloo cost him with all their glories."—DR. TULLY.

"Such practices have been the scourge and devastation of the human race for more than two thousand years."—DR. MINER.

For these extracts I am indebted to the kindness of DR. OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

Then came other publications in favor of milder measures; in England, Forbes' "Young Physic," and "Nature and Art in the cure of disease;" in this country, Bigelow's treatise on "Self-limited Diseases." The influence of these writings in the same direction was immense. Thus there were a host of influences, all progress was that way, and to attribute the change in practice entirely to Hahnemann is not only untrue, but absurd.

Time renders a verdict upon all human doctrines. First, by the fruits they bring forth; second, by the modifications they undergo. We have now to examine these systems in these two respects, and see what they have given to us of value, and what remains of them as originally promulgated.

Of Brunonianism, we have the doctrine of asthenic inflammation; *i. e.* a recognition of the fact that some cases of inflammation demand stimulants; also that the treatment of the general state takes precedence of the local affection. These date from Brown, and were a great advance on the times preceding him. All else he did or wrote has passed away and is forgotten.

Rasori extended and established more firmly, the doctrine of the action of certain medicines upon certain organs. He restored to the materia medica the febrifuges, the vascular sedatives, and other classes of medicines. Broussais had made nearly a clean sweep of everything but leeches and the lancet, and gum water. Corrected by the experience of other observers, and modified by the influence of more sober minds, Rasori's teachings have restored to favor many valuable medicines, and benefited the art.

What remains of Broussais therapeutics? Nothing, literally nothing. Venesection is a lost art. The lancet rests in its sheath. Under the influence of that unseen giant, Opinion, fostered and nourished by homeopathy, if you will, the pendulum of reaction has swung to the extremity of the arc. Will it ever return? I am one of those who believe that it will; not to swing to the other extreme, but far enough to bring within recognition a valuable remedy with a restricted range of application. My belief is based on physiological principles, on observation, on experience, on the history of the changing fortunes which many other remedies have undergone.

And now, of homeopathy in these two aspects. First, what has it given us? Nothing. It has not made a single direct contribution of value to medicine, not one addition to our therapeutic resources of such evident worth as to cause its adoption by the profession at large. Its indirect influence in changing practice has been considered. I would not belittle it. But when it comes to direct additions to our knowledge or powers, there are absolutely none. This system has now occupied the field for three quarters of a century with ultra doctrines, revolutionary in character, and making the loudest pretensions. During that time the regular profession has introduced the stethoscope, the laryngoscope, the ophthalmoscope, the sphygmograph, the hypodermic syringe, and the thermometer. It has discovered vaccination. It has introduced scores of new medicines of the highest value, such as the bromides and chloral, iodine and the iodides. Surgery within that time has been twice revolutionized, once by anesthetics, and once by antiseptics. Not one of these additions has come from homeopathy, or been suggested by it. Taking a department, which it claims as peculiarly its own, the investigation of the action of medicines, and it has given us nothing which will bear comparison with Magendie's and Bernard's investigations of the action of the alkaloids, nothing equal to Leibreich's brilliant application of chloral, based on its chemical changes, or to Brunton's discovery of the therapeutic value of nitrite of amyl from its physiological action.

And now as to doctrines. If Hahnemann's doctrines were great truths in medicine they would have remained unchanged, or but slightly modified, by those who accepted them, however slow might have been their acceptance by the profession at large. The fact is, the doctrines of Hahnemann have undergone modification in every decade since his time, and in the most essential points. There is not a single doctrine now generally accepted by the sect as it was taught by the founder. Immediately after Hahnemann's death, discord and schism began among his followers. The psora theory was too much for some even of his ardent votaries. Then for a time an exaggeration of the doctrine of similia threatened to swallow up the original homeopathy; this was isopathy, or the treatment of diseases by the products of disease, triturations of diseased

liver for affections of that organ, of expectoration for diseases of the lungs, etc. Psorin, the pus and mucus from the vesicles of itch, is still a standard remedy in homeopathic practice.

Time does not permit me to trace the numerous changes which homeopathic doctrines have undergone within the last fifty years, and to point out those which have been from time to time in the ascendant.* I can only give briefly the aspect they have taken on at present; in other words show what is the homeopathy of to-day.

It is far easier to say what it is not, than what it is. First of all, it is not Hahnemannism; not for the large majority. Against nothing do homeopaths protest more earnestly than that they should be judged by Hahnemann, and claim that it as unjust so to judge them as to compare our practice of to-day with that of the times of Rasori and Broussais. The plea is fair, and the mistake so often committed should not be again made, of attacking homeopathy by exposing the fallacies, the absurdities and the extravagancies of the founder of the system. Homeopaths would convey the impression that their creed has been improved since the days of its founder; the student of the subject finds that instead of widening, extending, and adding to, the changes consist in the lopping off of absurdities, in rejection of many articles, in the restriction of others, and that every change made is in the direction of regular medicine.

We all know from daily observation, that they no longer follow their master in regard to palliative treatment; they give opiates as freely, and resort to the hypodermic syringe as readily as we do. Amateur doctoring has passed away, and the practice of medicine is not the simple thing it once was. The spiritual doctrine of disease has disappeared; the advances of pathological anatomy have compelled this. They have been forced to acknowledge the value of a study of physiology and even of anatomy, in spite of the dictum of one of Hahnemann's near disciples, that by seeing a butcher slaughter a hog, a physician could get all the anatomy necessary. They no longer hold to their leader's doctrines in regard to the treatment

* "The history of homeopathy shows as many sects as there are temperaments of men."—C. WESSELHOEFT, *New England Med. Gaz.*, (Hom.) Nov. 1883.

of local diseases. Their representative men everywhere, now admit the curative powers of nature.* This is not much for any lay-man who ever recovered from a cold without using remedies, but it shakes the very foundations upon which rest the proofs of cures by infinitesimals.

I will take but one point to show how widely the homeopaths of to-day have departed from their early doctrine. I will not select that monstrous absurdity, the psoric theory, but the doctrine of potentization, which is essential if medicines are to be given in the decillionth of a grain, or if charcoal and common salt are powerful curative remedies. I quote only from homeopathic writers.

Wesselhoeft says of this doctrine that, "Those given to spiritism may believe in it, practical people will confine themselves to doses in which the presence of matter is demonstrable." Nowhere can you find a more complete refutation of this chimerical doctrine, based on experiment, than in the pages of this homeopathic writer.†

A contributor to the N. Y., Medical Times calls the potentization doctrine, "An outrage on well known philosophical principles, an insult to common sense and an offense to common honesty." The editor of the same journal says,‡ "The idea that a given substance can be indefinitely diluted and its powers indefinitely increased by it, is an allegation that would have astonished the inhabitants of the earth in the darkest and most superstitious ages of ancient Egypt." Kidd speaks of the doctrine as, "A whimsical notion begotten of fanciful dogmatism." Sorge as, "A folly pushed to extremes."†† Huber terms it an extravagance.‡‡

I could quote equally strong language and from as good authorities in regard to the folly of "provings" by which hundreds of symptoms have been attributed to an

* KIDD; The Laws of Therapeutics.

MAYLAENDER; Ueber heutige Homoeopathie, Berlin, 1885.

WEISSELHOEFT; The Law of Similars, Boston, 1883.

HIRSCHEL; Compendium der Homoeopathie, 1864. (quoted by Jurgensen.)

† The Law of Similars.

‡ Jan., 1878.

†† Die Homoeopathie befreit von Uebertriebungen.

‡‡ "Audiatur et altera pars!" A reply to Jurgensen, Vienna, 1877.

infinitesimal dose of such a substance as oyster shell, some of them experienced days and weeks after the dose was taken.

I will consider briefly what are claimed as the three distinctive features of modern homeopathy; they are, 1st. The small dose. 2d. The single medicine. 3rd. The law of similars.

These have all been changed from Hahnemann's teachings. This is especially the case in regard to dose. That it shall be small as compared with ours, is generally held, but as to how small there is no agreement. Some few hold to the high dilutions, many more to the lower potencies, from the first to the sixth. Moreover, the decimal dilution has been largely substituted for the centesimal of Hahnemann, so that with doses repeated several times every hour, as is their custom, the patient could soon be as fully under the influence of a medicine as if treated by one of us.

Other homeopaths again, and a large division of them, claim the right to give any dose they please, and use sudorifics, diuretics, etc., as such, in full doses. "Upon these points the votaries of homeopathy are as wide apart as the material and spiritual, as time and eternity."* There is not only discord upon this dose question, but often war, and it is carried on with no gentle words. A writer in the "Investigator," † speaks of the high potency men as "those, who, for the most part have lied like Cretans about their cures, or have been so incompetent in the matter of diagnosis as not to distinguish between ephemera and true pathological conditions." On the other hand, the President of the International Homeopathic Institute for 1883, says that, "Low potencies and crude drugs suppress symptoms, and the prescriber who, in his therapeutics, has never risen above them has never breathed the refined atmosphere of pure homeopathy."

Upon this leading point of doctrine homeopathy is a house divided against itself, its foundations undermined by opposing factions, and, it will be remarked, the modern changes in doctrine all lead towards regular medicine.

* Drugs; by Asa S. Couch, a paper read before the Amer. Institute of Homeopathy, 1883.

† April 21, 1883.

II. Upon no point of doctrine do homeopaths lay more stress, especially to the laity, than the single medicine. No feature of regular medicine do they attack more vigorously than that of combining medicines to modify or increase their effects. Nor are they at all particular to confine themselves to recent times, but with gross unfairness, go back to the days of polypharmacy for examples upon which to animadvert.* Yet no teaching of their school do they more frequently violate than this. It is only necessary to look through their journals to find abundant evidence that the law is broken daily. Medicines are not mixed together but they are given alternately, in close succession of doses, sometimes as near together as every ten or fifteen minutes. Now, the difference between mixing two medicines before swallowing, and mixing them in the stomach, by taking one soon after the other, is just the difference between tweedle-dum and tweedle-dee. There is nothing in which homeopathy has departed farther from the teachings of Hahnemann than in this, and nothing connected with it is so dishonest, and therefore so disgraceful, as this.

III. There remains but the doctrine of *similia*. This is the keystone of the arch, the one portion of the creed from which there is the least dissent. Belief in the universality of this law, they claim to be the one thing which separates them from us.† It is upon this that homeopaths base their claims to science, and justly so, for if the law of cure by similars is a universal law, as claimed by Hahnemann, then homeopathy is a science. But the universal laws of nature have no exceptions. There are none to the law of gravitation, none to the law that the planets move

* Thus, the author of "The grounds of a Homeopath's Faith," 1880, goes back to the *Theriaca*, of the Pharmacopeia of 1682; and SHARP, in his Tracts on Homoeopathy, No. 11, does the same, and gives the *Mithridate* of 1782, which contains fifty ingredients, as examples of our prescribing.

† Yet they are not all agreed upon this. Thus, in "The Grounds of a Homeopath's Faith," three lectures delivered by request to the students of the University of Michigan, by Prof. Jones, of the Homeopathic Department, we read: "If I were asked to state what chiefly distinguishes the homeopathic physician from his older brother in the science and art of medicine, I should at once reply: 'Not the law of cure, not the infinitesimal dose, not the Hahnemann hypothesis of chronic diseases; none of these, but simply this—his fixed faith in the efficiency of drugs.'"

over equal areas in equal times, none to the law of union by definite proportions in chemistry. Is *similia similibus curantur* a universal law? Rapou, the French defender of homeopathy, says it is not.*

Hirschel, in his Compendium of Homeopathy, says it is not.† Dr. Kidd says it is not the only law, and gives examples of cures by contraries.‡ Dr. Wyld, Vice President of the Homeopathic Society of Great Britain, says that now homeopathy includes the law of contraries.** Maylaender says, *similia similibus* is not a law, it cannot be proved by experiment, and it is therefore, an hypothesis, a belief, a dogma; "There is no universal law for the cure of human ailments."§ Heinike says a "scientific foundation for the law cannot be given."†† These are all homeopaths.

Now we all know that Hippocrates recognized this law of cure, when he said that diseases are sometimes best treated by similars and sometimes by contraries. The profession has recognized it ever since, and we act upon it to-day, whenever we can effect good by it, as for instance, in the treatment of dysentery with saline cathartics, diarrhea with aperients, etc.

This doctrine, the leading one of the system, has also undergone great change since Hahnemann's time. It has now "assumed a form essentially different from that held by the founder of the sect."‡‡ And Huber says that, "as explained by Hahnemann, it is no longer in accord with the advances of science."|| With Hahnemann, the law referred to a similarity between the symptoms produced by the medicine and those of the disease; now, it refers to a likeness between the pathological changes produced by the medicine, and those caused by the disease. Again the progress of pathological anatomy has forced this change. Now, instead of the effect of medicines being determined

* Quoted by SMYTHE, Medical Heresies, 1880.

† Quoted by Jurgensen.

‡ The Law of Therapeutics.

** Letter to Dr. Richardson, published.

§ *Op. cit.*

†† Die Principien der Homeopathie, 1871. Quoted by KOEPPE, Die Homeopathie Hahnemann's und der Neuzeit, Berlin, 1881.

‡‡ SORGE; *Op. cit.*

|| *Op. cit.*

by provings on the healthy, they are more sought for in the changes produced in the various organs or tissues by excessive doses.* Thus, bichloride of mercury for dysentery and Bright's disease, arsenic for cholera, because the toxicological effects of these medicines on the organs resemble the pathological changes found after death. Hence, with homeopaths post-mortem examinations of cases of poisoning assume a very high value. By study of the lethal effect of drugs, they now seek to find specifics for disease. This has become the great aim of the sect, whether it accords with or is contrary to the law of similars. "The main desideratum is to find a medicine between which and the disease there exists a specific relation."†

It is needless to say that any general, not to say universal, relation or connection between the pathological and toxicological changes in the organs remains yet unproven, just as does any relation between medicinal and disease symptoms according to the original doctrine of Hahnemann. Until this is done, homeopathy cannot establish its character as a science. Sciences are not built on truths of limited range and application.

The diversity of homeopathic doctrines shows that the term "homeopath" does not define a man's position with any accuracy at all. It covers very diverse, even opposite opinions. This fact has an important bearing upon the medical politics of the present. You know that our sister society of New York has been divided upon the question of consulting with homeopaths. It would be well for us, therefore, so long as this question remains a possible one for this and other societies to consider, to understand as clearly as possible what the term "homeopath" implies.

It includes, at least, three distinct and well defined classes: A few homeopaths are Hahnemannians. At the meeting of the N. Y. Homeopathic Society in 1883, three acknowledged themselves to be such out of sixty present. According to the British Medical Journal, the real homeo-

* The relative importance of the two are well shown in a monograph on "*Gelsemium Sempervirens*," by the Hughes Club, Boston, 1883. Those who would obtain a just idea of the scientific(?) character of homeopathy are referred to this recent and much lauded production of the school.

† WESSELHOEFT, *Op. cit.*

pathists of Great Britain can be counted on the fingers of a single hand. With this portion of the sect it is impossible to consult. You cannot reason with a man who maintains that a part is greater than the whole. These are intellectual cranks.†

A considerable larger portion of the sect is made up of those who have been educated in all the branches of medical science, who practice in good faith according to the law of similars, but who are bound by no rigid rules as to dose. This class is more numerous in eastern cities than here. It is large enough to have an organ. This journal carries at its head this extract from our code of ethics: "A regular medical education furnishes the only presumptive evidence of professional abilities and acquirements, and ought to be the only acknowledged right of an individual to the exercise and honors of his profession." And this: "Our practice is *not* based on an exclusive dogma, to the rejection of the accumulated experience of the profession, and of the aids actually furnished by anatomy, physiology, pathology and organic chemistry."

These men comprise the best of the sect. They support medical legislation to establish boards of health and ensure to the public educated physicians.* They are on their way back to the ranks of the profession; they are dropping their distinctive appellation, and certainly no obstacles ought to be placed in the way of their return. It is folly, and worse, to call them charlatans and quacks. They are men who exaggerate the value of the law of similars, and the efficacy of the small dose. There is room for honest difference of opinion as to the range of the law, and it will not do for men who use "Ringer" as a textbook, to be too particular about small doses. These men are but little farther from the general line of practice than many of our number who ride "hobbies," who appear so

† DR. BUCHMAN thus explains a cure, by high potencies, of a case of amblyopia with mental depression; "Just as alcohol by its greater physical affinity to water expels the sugar of milk from its watery solution, just as arsenic expels phosphorus from the living vitellin in the brain by its greater pathopoetic affinity to it than the nutritive one to phosphorus and assumes its place, so in our case, *similia similibus*, by its greater pathopoetic affinity, empowers the high potency of phosphorus to expel the morbid cause, grief, etc., acting on the cerebral and nervous cells, and takes up the place formerly occupied by the morbid cause." *Amer. Jour. Homeopathy*, Aug. 1884.

frequently in the journals with new and wonderful modes of treatment of diphtheria, scarlet fever, or of some other epidemic they have passed through. We smile at the enthusiasm of these men, we recognize their error to be the same as that of the system-makers, generalizing from a few facts, we glean from their bushel of chaff the few grains of truth there may be; we do not cut them off from professional fellowship. We ought to treat as professional brethren all men who have been educated in medicine, who are honorable in conduct, who elevate the profession above any of its sects, who are honestly trying to advance our knowledge and to cure disease and alleviate suffering, whatever may be their methods.

The majority of homeopaths are unfortunately of quite another character. They have adopted this line of practice for whatever there may be of popularity in it, and they pursue their calling in the sole spirit of trade. Shall I be charged with slandering my neighbors? Hear what the *Medical Times** says. It has dropped the distinctive title of "homeopathic" and advises others to do the same: "We are as confident as we can be of anything, that many use the term from mercenary motives, and that it is in many instances only a trade mark!" The editor says farther that the reply to this advice always is, that practice would be lost in doing so: "With this fact in view how can we reach any other conclusion than that the title is retained for the purpose of business." In plain English this means that they are obtaining money by false pretenses. These are the men who have kept bright the spirit of the founder—hatred of the regular profession. They habitually indulge in the grossest misrepresentations of regular practice, and play upon every prejudice which exists, or which they can excite in the public mind. They sneer about "drugs." It is a good word to use, it sounds like *dregs*, and *dregs* means dirt. They boast much of using "pure medicines," thereby conveying the slander that others are not careful about the quality of the chemicals they administer. They instill into the minds of their patrons the fear of "strong medicines," and, while doing so, deal out "*lachesis*," serpent venom, and "*crotalus*," the poison of the rattlesnake—medicines which are too strong

*August, 1884.

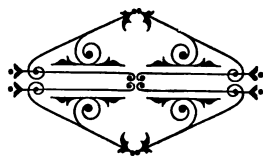
for our pharmacopeia. They emphasize the single medicine doctrine while dispensing several different kinds to be given at intervals of ten or fifteen minutes. These are the men who prate of being the "advanced thinkers" of the age, implying that no one else is trying to extend the knowledge or cure of diseases, while they bitterly oppose all efforts to enforce thorough medical education. These are the men who, to prevent the establishment of boards of health, go to the public and whine about "class legislation!" These are the men who are homeopaths in one house and in the next are anything that will suit. With these men we cannot consult. We want a basis of common honesty, at least, to say nothing of that dignity and education which should attach to a profession which deals with the dearest interests of humanity. We must treat them as we do those of our own practice, who with unblushing impudence placard the walls and fill the columns of the daily papers with boasts of their superior skill and false statements of cure.

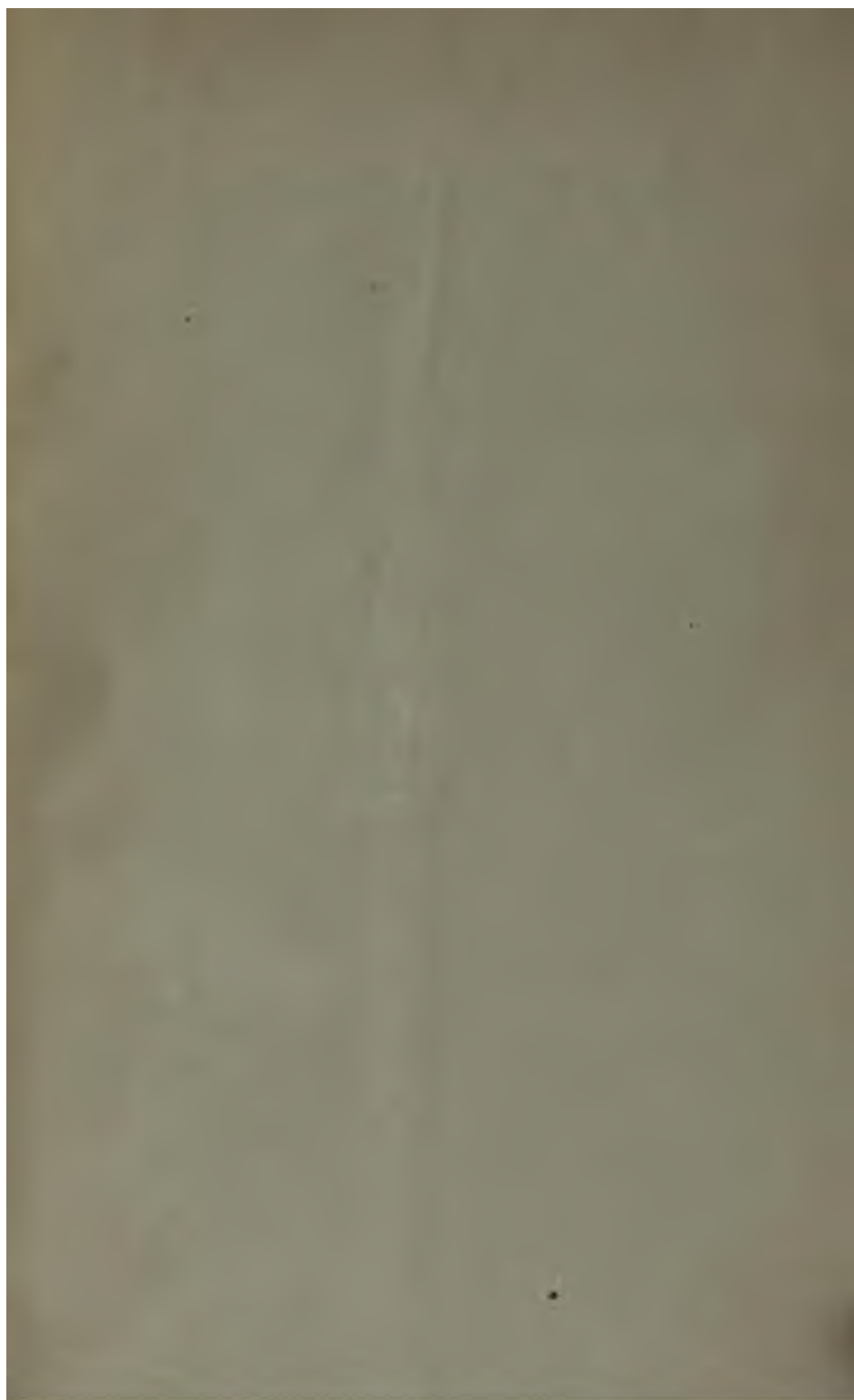
But all members of our profession who advocate consulting with homeopaths may set their minds at rest. The homeopaths do not want us to consult with them. When we decline to meet them there is a loud outcry about professional intolerance, and bigotry and persecution. But during this great movement in the State of New York to terminate this schism, and bring about common consultations, not a motion in its favor was made on their side of the house. I have looked carefully through the files of their journals but failed to find one word of friendly advance. Of course schisms and sectarianism do not elevate medicine, or increase respect for it, any more than they do religion. It were better if this division was closed. But judging from the spirit of the times, it will be a long time before this sect disappears. The better portion of the homeopaths make no organized effort toward reunion; those who ply it merely as a money-getting calling will never leave it as long as principles and prejudices exist in the human mind which make it profitable.

The extent to which I have occupied your time allows but a single question as to the future. Shall we have any more systems in medicine? The nineteenth century is not favorable to their growth, as shown by the time which

has elapsed since the last was promulgated. Still there are signs in the air. Is pathology to be hereafter based on micro-organisms, and therapeutics to consist only in the administration of germicides? In the past, systems would have been built over and over again upon what we know already of minute organisms and their relation to disease. Let us not commit again the great error of the past, that of generalizing from too few facts, and if what has been said during this hour shall in the slightest degree tend to prevent this, then not in vain has this feeble effort been made to trace through the last hundred years some of the side currents of medical doctrine.







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